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Message Text

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12
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 EB-11 DRC-01

RSC-01 /063 W
---------- 053118
R 242134Z APR 74
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3280

UNCLAS OTTAWA 1202

POUCHED ALL CONSULS IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, SCUL, CA
SUBJECT: FOOTBALL

REF: OTTAWA 1053

1. FOLLOWING FOUR DAYS OF DEBATE, HOUSE OF COMMONS APRIL 23 GAVE SECOND READING (APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE) TO GOVERNMENT'S BILL TO PREVENT EXPANSION OF U.S. FOOTBALL LEAGUES INTO CANADA. VOTE WAS 118 FOR AND 92 AGAINST, WITH 52 MEMBERS ABSENT OR NOT VOTING. VOTING FOLLOWED PARTY LINES WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS IN ALL PARTIES. PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES (PCS) OPPOSED BILL AND NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) SUPPORTED GOVERNMENT WITH EXCEPTION OF THREE TORONTO NDPERS.

2. BILL NOW GOES TO COMMITTEE FOR DETAILED STUDY. BILL'S SPONSOR, HEALTH AND WELFARE MINISTER MARC LALONDE, REPORTEDLY HAS EXPRESSED FEARS THAT BILL MAY NOT REPEAT NOT BE BROUGHT BACK TO HOUSE FOR THIRD AND FINAL READING BEFORE COMMONS MIGHT BE DISSOLVED FOR AN ELECTION.

3. MAIN THRUST OF NUMEROUS PC MEMBERS SPEAKING IN OPPOSITION TO BILL WAS WHY WASTE TIME OF PARLIAMENT ON FOOTBALL AT THIS CRITICAL TIME OF HIGH
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INFLATION, LABOR STRIFE, UNEMPLOYMENT, ETC. TENOR

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OF DEBATE IS CAPTURED IN SATIRICAL ARTICLE OF COLUMNIST CHARLES LYNCH CARRIED IN MONTREAL GAZETTE APRIL 23. HE WROTE THAT "FOOTBALL DEBATE HAS GIVEN THIS PARLIAMENT SOME OF ITS FINEST MOMENTS, NONE FINER THAN THE SPEECH OF HEATH MACQUARRIE" (PC FROM PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND) WHO QUOTING CICERO, SHAKESPEARE, WORDSWORTH, HERODOTUS AND RUSS JACKSON, POINTED OUT THAT GREY CUP WAS GIVEN BY AN ENGLISHMAN FOR THE GAME OF RUGBY, A GAME SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED BY THE BILL.

4. COMMENT: VERY MANY CANADIANS, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT, THINK THAT PARLIAMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ADDRESSING MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES CITED PARA 3 ABOVE. INTRODUCTION OF BUDGET MAY 6 AND POSSIBLE ELECTION CALL THEREAFTER COULD ECLIPSE FOOTBALL ISSUE. BILL WOULD DIE IN EVENT OF AN EARLY ELECTION. PORTER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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